# Koenings' Reeded Edge Half Newsletter #72

September 15, 2025

Dear Reeded Edge Half Collector:

My 2024 Census on Reeded Edge Halves showed only 7 collectors had all 16 die marriages for the year 1838.

On March 15, 2025, Newsletter #66 began a monthly series starting with the 1838 GR-1 Die Marriage where I would provide large photos and information on each die marriage for the next 16 months.

When Jules Reiver wrote his 1988 "Variety Identification Manual for United States Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836 – 1839" there were (17) JR Die Marriages listed. Since then, Jules with the help of collectors added 3 additional JR Die Marriages to 1838 as follows:

Number 1 May 16, 1988, 1838 JR-18. Discovered by Sheridan Downey

Number 2 November 11, 1988, 1838 JR-19. Discovered by J. Allen Bricker

Number 2 was revised on November 3, 1994 when Dick Graham discovered Die State b.

Number 3 March 1, 1990, 1838 JR-20. Discovered by Jules Reiver

Last month, I presented photos and information on the1838 GR-6, Die Marriage.

## 1838 GR-7

Below are the descriptions and notes provided to me by Dick Graham in 2010:

**"NUMBER 2 – NOVEMBER 11, 1988**
**REVISED NOVEMBER 3, 1994**

**1838 JR19**

**Discovered by J. Allen Bricker, of Riderwood, MD. Die State b discovered by Richard Graham, of Washington DC.**

**Obverse – Several horizontal lines connect bust to dentils.**

**Reverse – Dot over head of eagle. Line under A3. Slight buildup under MER, with tiny lines around it.** (Small dot between UN at bottom)

**State a – Obverse – (1) A crack from the middle of a dentil under *3 Into the field to the right.**

**State b – Obverse – Crack (1) curves down toward the bust. (2) A crack from the 4th dentil below *1 to the topof the point of the bust. (3) A cracl frp, the 6th dentil below *1 curves along the bottom of the bust. When the drapery turns up, this crack continues to the right over 18.**

(comes prime without obverse crack)"

I do not know of any "Rapid Finder" categories that Jules may have written for 1838 JR-19.

When Dick Graham wrote his 2012 book on Reeded Edge Halves, he reported the following census for the 1838 GR-7 die marriage: 62, 62, 58, 58, 55, 53, 50, 50, 50 and 50.

My 2024 Census shows: 62, 61, 58, 58, 55, 55, 45, 45, 45 and 40. (reported by collectors)

When I researched "Stacks Bowers Archives", I found 6 items listed ranging from grades of F details to PCGS AU55. When I researched "Heritage Archives", I found only 3 items listed,

Dick Graham rated the 1838 GR-7, die marriage as R-4 (76 to 200 known in 2012. Over the last 13 years since Graham's book was printed, I have recorded a large number of auction sales and now rate 1838 GR-7 as R-3 (201 to 500 known). 1838 GR-7 is unusual for a couple of reasons, including the fact that the reverse is still Prime even on specimens that are VLDS with an obverse crack.

**1838 GR-7, PCGS XF45 – Prime Obverse**

The above photo shows Obverse 6 which is Prime (no cracks) and comes with a Prime reverse. I have included a line from the top of 3 to the left most point of Star 13 to illustrate how it is slightly above the 3 in the date. The 8 is slightly tilted to the left and far from the 3. The large circle shows several die lines that are connected to the end of the bust and to the dentils. There is also line up from the drapery up to the right toward the clasp (see small circle).

The medium circle at Star 10 shows a half moon shaped lump below the lowest inside point.

The reader should notice that there is no die break under Star 3, which may explain why this die marriage wasn't discovered until November 1988.

**1838 GR-7, PCGS AU58 CAC – VLDS Stage a -Jim Koenings**

The above photo shows a Very Late Die Stage of Obverse 6 with a die break that begins at the rim, just below Star 3 and curves near the bust. The line from the top of the 3 to left most point of Star 13 is illustrated again to show the 8 is slightly above the 3. The 8 is slightly tilted to the left and far from the 3. The large circle shows several die lines that are connected to the end of the bust and to the dentils. Again, there is a line up from the drapery up to the right toward the clasp (see small circle).

Again, the medium circle at Star 10 shows a half moon shaped lump below the lowest inside point.

**1838 GR-7, PCGS AU58 CAC, Reverse F – Jim Koenings**

Graham says Reverse F is Prime- no cracks. He also mentions there is a lump in the field above the center of the Eagle's beak. There appears to be many die lines behind DOL..

Since Obverse 6 has a very large crack under Star 3 (as shown on previous page), I suspect Reverse F is no longer Prime as there appears to be a die break from the left wing tip that curves near the tip of the two leaves below. I was unable to confirm this die break on two later specimens.

Graham also says "Rough area at the bottom of stripe 4 where it meets the shield border. There is a lump between stripes 1 and 2 just above the bottom".

# Update on 1838 GR-5 Die Marriage

In Newsletter #70, I mentioned that there were only 3 specimens out of the 23 known specimens of 1838 GR-5 that had a 100% reverse die break (Retained CUD). I recently emailed J Alan Bricker asking for additional information and photos. Bricker replied that his specimen was indeed 100% with the following statement:

"My 1838 JR-18 / GR-5 with full bisecting die crack is held in safe deposit. Therefore, I am unable to provide a photo of the coin until later. It does have full crack going through the "U" to the rim. It is a mid-grade coin in F-VF range. To the best of my recollection, it surfaced at the 1995 Central States show at Milwaukee WI.

I will make a note to photograph the coin when I do access the safe deposit box where it is stored".

# Conclusions

After Jules wrote his "Variety Identification Manual for United States Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836 – 1839" in 1988, there have been 3 new die marriages found for the year 1838 as follows:

1. 1838 JR-18, now known as 1838 GR-5
2. 1838 JR-19, now known as 1838 GR-7
3. 1838 JR-20, now known as 1838 GR-16

1838 GR-5 is the rarest 1838 die marriage with 23 specimens known today.
1838 GR-16 is the 2nd rarest 1838 die marriage
1838 GR-7 is the most unusual since its reverse is basically Prime, even with Later Die Stage obverses that have die cracks. Since its discovery very few MS specimens have shown up. My "Records of Sales" shows 39 specimens have been sold in various auctions causing me to change its Rarity value to R-3 (201 to 500 known). Since I am a serious die stage collector, I have 7 specimens ranging from Prime to VLDS. A couple were found in 2010. Only 10 collectors reported them to me for my 2024 Census.

# Collectors Comments

Since January 2025, I have noticed a large number of important coins being offered at various auctions. Not just Reeded Edge Halves but my second favorite series 1804 to 1807 Draped Bust Quarters. For over 30 years, I have always wanted to have an 1805 B-2b quarter with a retained CUD at Stars 10 through 13. In the last two months, I have won 3 specimens, 2 from the NorthEast Collection from Stacks Bowers in June 2025 and another from Steve Tompkins Collection sold in August 2025. See photo of obverse on next page.

**1806 B-2b PCGS F12 CAC, Retained CUD – Jim Koenings**

The above coin is among my new favorites.

## Next Month

Next month's Newsletter #73 will feature large photos and information on the 1838 GR-8, Die Marriage. I currently rate it as R-3 (201 to 500 known).

# Closing Thoughts

Several sources have told me that the ANA Coin Show in Oklahoma was a great show for both dealers and collectors. Saturday, September 13, 2025, I went to the Buena Park Coin Show, a stone's throw from Knotts Berry Farm. The parking lot was totally full. Many eager collectors.

More importantly, I spent over an hour talking to John Dannreuther, an author of several gold books and others. I was previously introduced to John by Gary Rosner at the Long Beach Coin Show in September 2024. John and I started out talking about 1838 GR-5's and the fact that I own 12 of the 23 known 1838 GR-5 Die Marriages. While talking to John, he brought up the subject of Leroy Van A1lan and Rotated Dies. When he started to show me his RotaFlip Die Rotation Guide, I asked him if he knew Michael S, Fey. He said he knew him well.

I then showed John Dannreuther (JD) a diagram with a clock face (The Sleeping Giant) that I had originally published in the March 2023 J R Journal. At that time there were 5 known 1839 GR-8's that were Greatly Rotated. My updated diagram, as of April 4, 2024, now shows 8 different positions for 1839 GR-8, Greatly Rotated, 24 positions that have a Normal Alignment and at least 6 that were Late Die Stage with a die break through D2. I told JD that I now own 5 of the 8 known Greatly Rotated specimens and that each position was unique as the die rotated with each additional strike. At the time, I thought each strike could vary an undetermined amount each time. When John Dannreuther saw the diagram, he immediately said "No". John's opinion was that each strike moved only a small amount after each strike and pointed out the uniformity of pattern shown in my latest clock diagram.

What a pleasure it was to speak to someone that fully understood the minting process.

For those of you that have Graham's book on Reeded Edge Halves and aren't using it, I can only feel sorry for you. Since January 2025, I have seen numerous auctions, including Stacks Bowers, Heritage and on eBay where incredibly rare coins are selling cheaply. I have also seen two major sales of Draped Bust Quarters, (NorthEast Collection and Steve Tompkins Collection sell in the last two months. In 2024, I saw the Jon D, Lusk Collection sell.

I thank Ron Guth of www.TrophyCoins.com again for his help. He kept me from making a serious error.

If you have any questions, please contact me at bustcoin1@verizon.net

Happy Hunting!